

EPA Awards more than \$460,000 for environmental Projects along the U.S.-Mexico Border

Funds will be used towards reducing trash in the Tijuana River, vehicle emissions reduction strategies, recycling materials, and developing educational projects

LOS ANGELES— The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has awarded \$461,368 in grants to fund seven environmental projects along the California and Arizona U.S-Mexico border. The projects include restoration of an important estuary, expansion of a municipal oil recycling program and several efforts to track air pollution in the region.

“These grants will help improve air quality, create a healthier river, and reduce the waste going into local landfills,” said Jared Blumenfeld, EPA’s Regional Administrator for the Pacific Southwest.

“Communities on both sides of the border will receive benefits as their environment and public health are better protected.”

The funds were awarded in partnership with the Border Environment Cooperation Commission, under the bi-national U.S.-Mexico Environmental Program: Border 2020. The projects selected address the public health and environmental protection goals of the Border 2020 Program and are part of the overall environmental funding available for the California/Baja California and Arizona/Sonora regions. The funds will be matched by an additional \$354,746 in funding from the recipient organizations.

The grants were announced during the opening ceremony of the “Border Gateway to Nature” at the Border Field State Park. The bi-national project was funded by the San Diego Foundation and EPA’s Border 2020 through a grant to 4walls International. 4walls constructed bi-national park space using trash pulled from the Tijuana River Valley and tributary canyons. The re-purposed trash might have otherwise entered the Tijuana River, harming the fragile ecosystem of the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve in San Diego. Mexico’s Environment Ministry (SEMARNAT) is also contributing significant resources to the beautification of Los Sauces Park in Tijuana.

Last year marked the 20th anniversary of the North American Free Trade Agreement and the 30th anniversary of the La Paz Agreement. Through these agreements, EPA has made significant investments that have resulted in major environmental benefits including more than 570 tons of e-waste properly disposed or recycled, the removal of more than 12 Million scrap tires from dump sites border wide, and the connection of households to drinking water and wastewater services benefitting the more than 8.5 Million border residents.

The following organizations received grants:

Imperial County Air Pollution Control District

Idling Impacts at the Calexico West and East Ports of Entry Calexico, Calif.

Grant Amount: \$98,800

The Imperial County Air Pollution Control District will estimate particulate matter (PM) and nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions from northbound idling vehicles waiting at the Calexico West and East ports of entry. The project will also identify short and long term vehicle emissions reductions strategies in the Calexico/Mexicali area.

Pronatura-Noroeste A.C.

Restoration of the Upper Tijuana River Corridor

Ensenada, Baja Calif.

Grant Amount: \$98,500

Pronatura-Noroeste A.C., a non-profit, conservation organization, will restore the upper reach of the Tijuana River, restoring the flood plain in this part of the river which is a source of trash and sediment entering the Tijuana River Estuary in San Diego. The organization will conduct trash cleanup and sediment removal, re-vegetate the estuary with native plants and incorporate a new wastewater reuse system to irrigate vegetation.

Tijuana Calidad de Vida

Air Emissions Inventory for Nogales, Sonora

Nogales, Sonora

Grant Amount: \$53,610

Tijuana Calidad de Vida, a non-profit organization, in partnership with air emissions experts and the University of Sonora, will develop an air emissions inventory for the city of Nogales, Sonora that will identify air emissions sources and quantify their emissions.

Arizona State University

Mariposa Port of Entry Wait Time Emissions Study

Phoenix, Arizona

Grant Amount: \$67,314

ASU will estimate particulate matter (PM) and nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions from northbound idling vehicles waiting at the Mariposa port of entry in Nogales and use the information to identify emissions reductions strategies.

Arizona Department of Environmental Quality

Tools to Help Border Communities Reclaim Resources

Phoenix, Arizona

Grant Amount: \$63,621

ADEQ will develop a web-based toolkit designed to provide educational resources and best practices on electronic waste and cleanup events. The project will pilot use of the e-waste toolkit using collection events in border cities designed to divert approximately 100,000 lbs. of reusable and recycling electronics from ending up in landfills.

Asociación de Protección y Seguridad Ambiental (APSA)

Training on Handling of Wastewater Containing Metals and Cyanide

Nogales, Sonora

Grant Amount: \$63,015

ASPA, a non-profit association of environmental protection, health, and safety experts, will develop a 16-hour seminar for metal plating shops and the metals manufacturing industry on ways to handle and reduce metals and cyanide discharges affecting the Nogales International Wastewater Treatment Plant.

City of Nogales, Sonora

Used Oil Collection and Management in Nogales

Nogales, Sonora

Grant Amount: \$16,508

The city of Nogales will expand its used oil recycling program by establishing new collection points and trainings on used oil collection and management for small businesses in Nogales. The city will also partner with oil recyclers to collect used oil free of charge. _

The Border 2020 Program is a bi-national collaborative effort with a mission is to protect human health and the environment in the U.S.-Mexico border region. BECC is an international organization established for the purpose of preserving, protecting, and enhancing the environment in the U.S. – Mexico border region.

For More information on the Border 2020 Program, please visit: www.epa.gov/border2020 .